

## ESP NEEDS ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE ENGINEERING STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF MULTAN.

Muhammad Tariq Ayoub\*, Jazib Saleem Khan\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The present study is focused at investigating English language needs of undergraduate engineering students in Multan. In this study effort was made to explore the English usage frequency, its significance for engineering students, their current level of English competence and their English language needs. For the purpose of finding out English language needs of the engineering students quantitative approach has been applied in this study. Data was gathered using questionnaire as data collection tool. Research population was selected from two universities for gathering data considering them the main stakeholders of this discourse community. A questionnaire was developed for the collection of data, more precisely; closed-ended questions were distributed to 120 engineering students in order to identify their English language needs and their perceptions towards the usefulness of the current English language teaching materials in use. The results showed that these students have positive attitudes towards learning English language. Furthermore, productive skills (speaking and writing) have been rated as the skills that engineering students want to develop most. Further, the study found that the current teaching materials in use do not meet students' needs hoping that the findings of this study would be the basis for designing more feasible ESP teaching materials that would meet students' needs.*

**Keywords:** ESP; Needs Analysis; Engineering.

**Type of Paper:** A Case study.

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\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt. Science College.  
Multan.tariqayoub2000@yahoo.com.

\*\*Research Scholar, M.Phil Linguistic, Institute of Southern Punjab, Multan.  
[jazyroks@gmail.com](mailto:jazyroks@gmail.com).

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## **1.INTRODUCTION**

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been a standout phenomenon amongst the most well-known insightful subjects in the course of the most recent decades, yet has so far got less consideration from language researchers and analysts than it merits. This might be because of the way that ESP courses are more intricate and testing than most English language instructors see at the start of their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) educating. English for Specific Purposes suggests critical examination embraced to deliver educationally appropriate materials and activities for most grown-up learners characterized in a particular setting.

As described by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), NA is an approach to manage ESP course arrange for whose crucial goal is to choose the substance for an appropriate English language course where all decisions as to substance and framework are in light of learners' purposes behind learning. By separating learners' necessities, syllabus designers can perceive the specific language needs that can be tended to in making targets, destinations, and substance for a specific language program. Consequently, it is a fundamental part for the learning procedure (Long, 2005). Despite the perspectives of learners on their needs, the perspectives of every one of those others included should be assembled in the needs analysis process since this can help in collecting more genuine and strong data for giving better resources for learners (operation. cit., 2005). In educational settings where a needs analysis has not been done, there is frequently a mismatch between students' authentic prerequisites and the goals and focuses of the framework.

Extensive looks into in ESP have demonstrated that individual grown-up learners have diverse needs and learn English for various reasons. Furthermore, it has been encountered that most ESP classes have limited time to learn English. In like manner, the educating of ESP ought to, in this way, be precisely arranged to fit learners' particular needs what's more, purposes. The ESP venture concentrates on the significance and parts of learners both in the outline of the course and its execution in the educating and learning forms.

There are various variables which add to engineering learners' absence of capability in English and lack in relational abilities. The requirement for improving engineering learners' relational abilities

and set them up to the working environment has been tended to in various gatherings and inquiries with respect to the adequacy of the engineering English educational modules too have been raised. What is the part of organizations of engineering and technology in building up the students' employability abilities? Should the Engineering English language course be adjusted or overhauled? What measures ought to be taken to make the learners industry prepared?

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

It has been noticed that English is the main fundamental language of global gatherings, briefings, meetings and discussions. All the communication happens in English language. Inferable from all previously stated components, it is inescapable for experts to be master in different abilities. They should have adequate nature to speech designs and territorial accents, for example, conveying presentation, examination method, note taking, amiable location shapes, questions frames and social standards of English talking social orders (Maher, 1986). As the economy in the globalization procedure has caused new learning, a few issues have emerged, for example, transferability from academic to proficient settings. Impressive exploration in second and remote languages has demonstrated that grown-up learners have distinctive needs and learn language for various reasons. The instructing of a language ought to, along these lines, be precisely arranged to fit learners' particular needs and purposes.

In like manner, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is for the most part utilized as a part of circumstances in which the charge of English being conferred identifies with a particular employment, subject, or reason. Since enthusiasm for the educating of ESP started in the late 1960s, the field of ESP has become rapidly elegant in the language educating world. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has been a standout amongst the most well-known insightful subjects in the course of the most recent decades, yet has so far got less consideration from language researchers and analysts than it merits. This might be because of the way that ESP courses are more intricate and testing than most English language instructors see at the start of their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) educating.

As indicated by Mansoor (2005), the principle component behind great English instructing is that it is possible that it is taught as language or as a subject. In instructive foundations of Pakistan, English is taught as a subject yet not as a language. In such manner, absence of prepared instructors in the vast majority of the schools is another quandary in Pakistan. Defective instructive

arrangement of Pakistan is the significant purpose behind yield of the English language. Ghani (1999) states that students' ineptitude is the consequence of teacher centered English classrooms, absence of formal instructor trainings and utilization of customary Grammar Translation Method (GMT) at optional level training. Shamim & Qureshi, (2009) opine that learners don't get introduction to genuine correspondence circumstances with their colleagues. He includes that bumbling English educators concentrate on packing of vocabulary and language structure.

### **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

In the education of engineering students, specific English language skills are needed to enable engineering students to succeed in academic settings (Tan, 1999). It is known inside establishments of basic, secondary and advanced education that English has been taught as an individual topic in all foundations of Pakistan. Despite the fact that English is widely taught in Pakistan, and fluency in the language confers social prestige, little attention has been given to developing a curriculum to meet the English language needs of engineering students in their professional studies to ensure that they are able to understand the content of their major subjects in engineering disciplines, which are all taught in English (Abbas, 1993; Rahman, 1999). In this research, learners' goals and needs will be studied to give the vital data for the outline of an English syllabus for engineering students. Engineering students in Pakistan have a place with fluctuated social, cultural, financial and instructive backgrounds. As English is not the primary language of engineers in Pakistan, larger part of them is powerless being used of English language in potential expert settings. This is a result of absence of need-based methodology for English language educating. Educators and Students trust that a suitable exertion on dissecting the requirements and needs of the learners would help the ESP learning experience.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The point of the present study is to investigate the language learning attitudes and break down the needs of the engineering students of ISP (Institute of Southern Punjab) and BZU (Bahauddin Zakaria University) and give recommendations to outlining an ESP course to fulfill their professional, occupational, educational and instructive needs. It is normal that they will have the capacity to understand particular profession related register of specialized terms and expressions required in occupational settings.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

This study is critical and remarkable in various ways. It is trusted that the study will make a noticeable commitment to the field of ESP in Pakistan. The present study contends for examining the English language skills of engineering students however it suggests the same for learners of different fields. In Pakistan, it is important that the think tank, policy makers and English instructors ought to be clear regarding why the learners of one department are considering English and what teaching methods, systems and materials ought to be utilized to meet the specific needs of the learners. The instance of English for the engineering students should be taken as a case and its outcomes can be summed up to outline other ESP courses for the learners of different callings like aeronautics, law and medication.

It is additionally assumed that the discoveries of the present study will be used in the improvement of future English course materials by the authorities for the engineering learners. Additionally, it will likewise give a rule to the editors to modernize and sort out the course substance, viewpoint and presentation of the books in a powerful way. Further research in ranges like instructor training, materials arrangement and development and evaluation in Pakistani settings will start by taking bits of knowledge from the discoveries of this study.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

- ▶ What are the attitudes of engineering students towards English Language Learning (ELL)?
- ▶ What is the proficiency level of English language of the undergraduate engineering students?
- ▶ What are the needs of English language of the undergraduate engineering students?
- ▶ What are engineering students' preferred teaching styles to learn English language?
- ▶ What is their perception towards the usefulness of English language material in use?

#### **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The term ESP is all things considered addressed as English for Specific Purposes. Significance of ESP as hypothetical term appeared in the writing in the 1960s. It is a course inside the broader master structure of the English language teaching (ELT). Investigators were of the point that all language teaching can be depicted as being for 'specific purposes' as in most "general" lingo courses are planned to engage learners to use the outside language for an arrangement of purposes,

for instance, passing an examination to satisfy a need for area to higher studies. Regardless, Candlin's (1978) advancement of English for remarkable (specific) purposes has given another interpretation to English Language Teaching (ELT), course development and designing, and materials arrangement.

Clear contrasts in how individuals argue about the significance of ESP can be seen as referred to in Anthony (1997: 9-10): "Some linguists are of the view that ESP is simply known as the learning of English for some specific purpose. On the other hand, mostly linguists were more to the point that it can be said as teaching of language generally utilized in present studies or English language teaching for professional reasons."

Mackay & Mountford (1978) propose three sorts of functions for which ESP is being utilized. These include: "Employment prerequisites", (for worldwide phone operators, common aircraft pilots, and so on), "Professional preparing program" (hotel management staff, specialized traders, and so forth) and "Scholastic or proficient study", (medication, engineering, and so on.

Stevens (1988) depicts ESP by making a qualification between its outright and variable attributes. As far as supreme attributes, ESP comprises of English language educating which is composed to address determined issues related to the learner, linked in substance (topics and subjects) to specific methods, occupations and exercises and focused on the language suitable to those exercises in grammar, vocabulary, communication, semantics, and so forth, and investigation of the particular discourse. Interestingly with the part of General English, as respect to the variable attributes, he is of the view that ESP might be, (a) Limited with regards to the language aptitudes must be learned. (b) Not trained by predetermined technique (p. 1-2) Focusing on learners' needs begun in the 1970s emerges on the scene because of the eagerness and intensity for outlining of a language course that could meet particular personal and societal needs (Palacios, 1992). Richards (2001: 51) characterizes the term needs analysis as: "strategies used to gather data about learners' needs." Hutchinson and Waters (1987) depict NA on the premise of "wants" and "needs" keeping in mind the end goal to characterize on the part of the learners among what they actually need to learn and what they sense they have to know.

Gupta (2007) claims that NA is a technique for understanding: how to close a learning or execution gap. It includes deciding the vital needs and the most effective method to address them. The procedure incorporates contrasting the present condition with the wanted condition, characterizing the issues, understanding the practices and components that add to the present condition, deciding in the event that and how particular practices and components can be changed to deliver the wanted condition, creating arrangement techniques, and building support for activity.

The best definition of NA was given by Richards & Schmidt (2002). They define it as: "The procedure of understanding the requirements encourages the learner for learning the language and organizing the needs as per their preferences. Needs evaluation makes utilization 30 of both objective and subjective data (information from surveys, tests, meetings, perception). Richterich (1983) characterizes the idea of needs analysis as a technique which comprises fundamentally of incorporating data both on the people or gatherings of people who are going to use a language and on the utilization which they are normal to make of it" (referred to in Johnson and Johnson, 1998, p.228).

As per as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), and Robinson (1980, 1991), define the word "need" is frequently utilized as an umbrella term covering two sorts, in particular: "Target Needs" and "Learning Needs". Robinson (1991:7) characterizes learning needs as "what the learner needs to do to really obtain the language" In the same vein, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) bring up that a pertinent needs examination must think about not just the target situation needs where the inquiry 32 "What the learners need to learn" should be the focal point, and also "The way the learners will learn." They also explained it as "tell me what you need English for and I will tell you the English that you need".

In the literature of language there are numerous studies have been conducted in this regard. Kittidhaworn (2002) for instance, conducted a research on engineering students in Thailand. The focus of this research was to investigate perceived English language needs of engineering students. In the same manner Al-Tamimi & Shuib (2008) investigated the English language needs of engineering students that indicated that the current material of English language courses is not sufficient enough to fulfill the language needs of the students.

A comparative review was led by Mohamad Salehi (2010) at Sharif University in Iran to test the English language needs of engineering students. The outcomes demonstrated that note taking what's more, interpretation aptitudes were viewed as improper and irrelevant skills in their future professions. It was likewise found that specialized written work aptitude was imperative; in any case, it has been overlooked completely. Another research study was conducted by Hanafi Zaid and Kamarudin (2011) to investigate the communication needs of mechanical engineering students at University Tecknologi Malaysia. The results of the study investigated that the most influential skill needed by the students was oral communication and a large number of students were of the view that they felt really hard to communicate in English in practical environment.

Sattar and Zahid (2011) conducted a study to investigate the English language communication needs of Textile engineering students at National Textile University in Pakistan. They were of the view that developing more suitable language courses and helping materials for the students were of extreme importance. Rahman (2012) carried out another study to examine the needs for reading skills of the undergraduate computer engineering students at Putra University in Malaysia. The results showed that most of the students had been facing difficulties in reading skills for instance, skimming, scanning, and decoding the meaning of the related texts while interpreting.

All these studies certify that it is really important to undertake an investigation on the needs of the participants of various fields before conducting any language program because needs analysis minimize the risk of the failure as the objectives and goals are clear to the teachers and as well as the learners.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was designed to investigate the English language needs of the engineering students. This study was based on quantitative method. The information was collected through a questionnaire because it seemed to be the most appropriate tool for gathering the views and demands of the learners. A closed end interview was also conducted with a few chosen subjects in order to verify the data collected from the questionnaire. However, the interview data were not recorded in the findings and results.

#### **3.1. Sample of study**

The study was conducted at BZU (Bahauddin Zakaria University) and ISP (Institute of Southern Punjab) during the year 2016-17. The sample used in this study consists of 120 randomly selected students from the 3rd and 4th year of engineering, 60 from each university. The motive behind selecting 3rd and 4th year students is that they are mature enough to talk about their English language needs.

### **3.2 Data Collection Method**

In present study, the questionnaire was utilized as the significant strategy for inquiry to examine the English language needs of undergraduate engineering students as they are easier to analyze, require less time and don't require much from the researcher as it is the situation of other techniques, especially interviews and tests. The questionnaire was designed with close ended questions and it was divided among 120 randomly selected engineering students, 60 from each university to collect information to answer the research questions. Regarding the frame, the questionnaire contains various questions intended to collect particular answers from the respondents. Questionnaire comprises the questions to investigate the language learning attitude, language proficiency and language needs of engineering students.

Taking into account the acceptance and alteration of the questionnaire from the piloting and the rectification of the research supervisor, the questionnaire was distributed. Before regulating the questionnaire, the researcher met the teachers of the participants face to face to get endorsement for requesting their students' participation in the study. Before circulating the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the goals and importance of this research. They were likewise asked to answer genuine and legitimate responses. Additionally, they were permitted to request any help they may require. When they got done with noting them, they were asked for to check their responses for deficiency or missing answers.

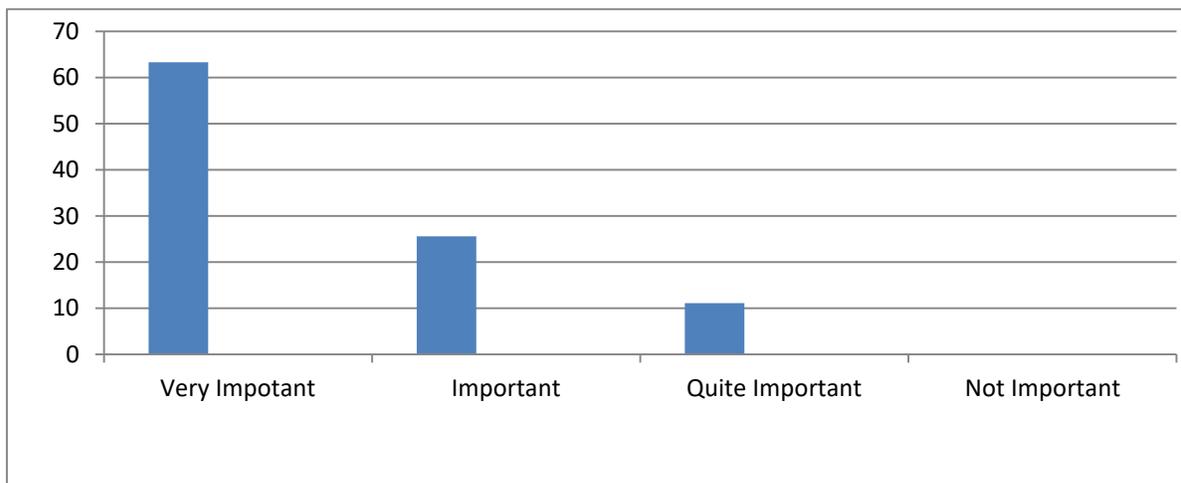
### **4. DATA ANALYSIS**

The Questionnaires was distributed among 120 students, and got back 90 questionnaires completely filled in by the students. The return rate was 75 percent. The items of the needs analysis questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively by making use of descriptive statistics. Each item of questionnaire is presented by frequency, percentage and mean.

First section of the questionnaire was designed to ask the demographic information of the respondents. Majority of the participants, 63.3% (n=57) belonged to the age group 21-22 years

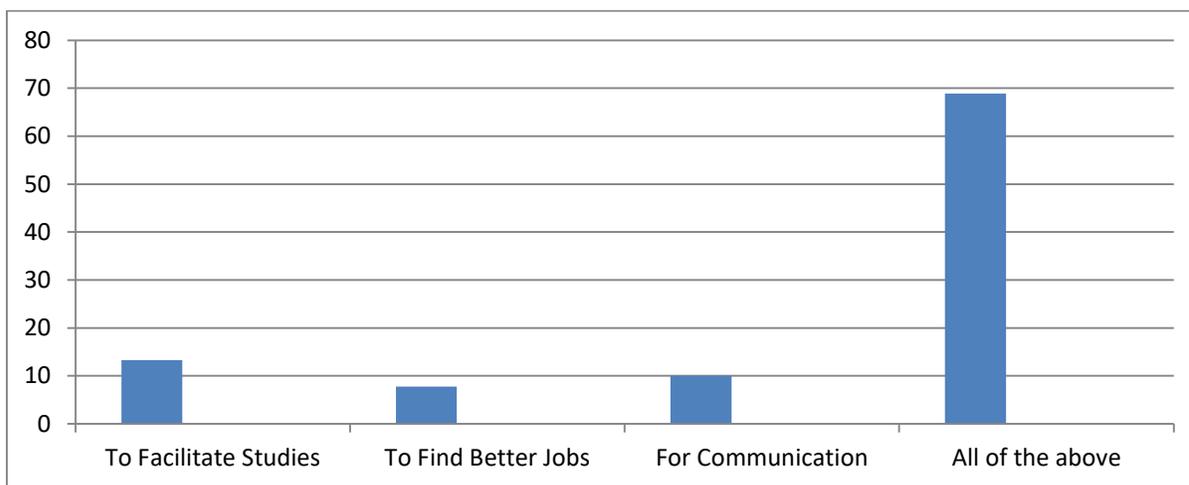
and the highest number of participant 61.1% (n=55) were male. 58.9% (n=53) belongs to urban background and most of the participants 43.3% (n=39) were from Punjabi speech community and use Punjabi as their mother tongue. Second section was based on the questions regarding the attitude of the participants towards the English language learning. It includes two questions asking about their perception towards the importance of ELL and for what purposes they want to learn English for. Regarding 1<sup>st</sup> question most of the students 63.3% (n=57) believed that learning English language is “very important” Meanwhile no participant denied the importance of ELL.

Figure 1: Attitude towards the Importance of ELL



In reply to the second question 13.3% (n=12) participants came up with the answer that they want to learn English to facilitate their studies. 7.77% (n=7) said that they want it to find better jobs while 10% (n=9) replied that they want to learn English for communication purposes. 68.9% (n=62) wanted to learn English for all the above stated purposes.

Figure 2 Attitude towards the importance of ELL



Third Section was based on the questions regarding learners’ English language proficiency in various language skills. The participants responded by selecting an option out of given three as how much they are proficient in various language skills. Table 1 indicates the results as results are given in frequency, percentage and mean of the related language skill.

According to table 1 majority of the participants viewed that they were moderately competent in speaking and writing skills, 45.6% and 48.9% respectively. Maximum number of participants found themselves fully competent 51.1% in listening skill and 57.8% in reading skill. 60% of the participants were of the view that they are just mildly competent in English vocabulary while 41.1% suggested that they are mildly competent in communication skills. 43.3% participants have a full command on English grammar while 42.2% participants were moderately competent in English language pronunciation. Mean for the majority of the language skills was on the higher side as most of the participants opted to go with the second and third option. Only less productive skills such as listening, reading and English grammar has the lower mean as compared to the other English language skills.

**Table 1: Competency in English Language Skills**

No	Skill	Fully	Moderately	Mildly	Mean
1	Speaking	23.3% (21)	45.6% (41)	31.1 (28)	2.07

2	Writing	31.1% (28)	48.9% (44)	20% (18)	1.88
3	Listening	51.1% (46)	41.1% (37)	7.8% (7)	1.58
4	Reading	57.8% (52)	24.4% (22)	17.8% (16)	1.60
5	Vocabulary	10% (9)	30% (27)	60% (54)	2.50
6	Grammar	43.3% (39)	37.8 (34)	18.9% (17)	1.75
7	Pronunciation	28.9% (26)	42.2% (38)	28.9% (26)	2.0
8	Communication	22.2% (20)	36.7% (33)	41.1% (37)	2.18

Fourth Section of the questionnaire was based on the questions to inquire about the English language needs of the engineering students. Four basic skills were divided into 20 sub-skills and language components. Participants chose from three different options for every sub-skill. Answer from each question of this section is presented in terms of percentage and mean.

**Table 2: Perception of Training Needs**

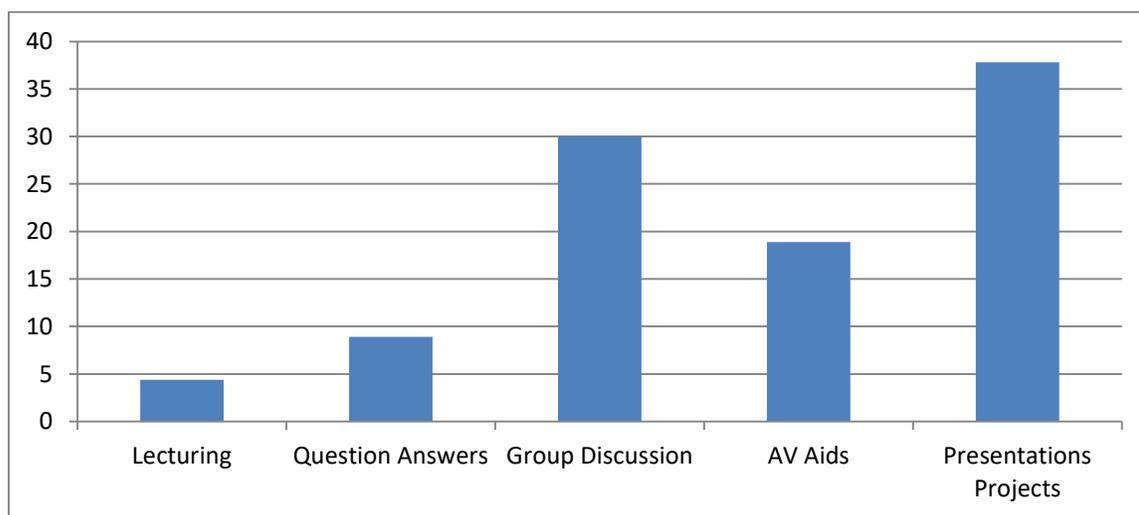
Language Sub-Skill	Lot of Training	Little Training	No Training	Mean
Listen to understand questions	12.2%	40%	47.8%	2.35
Listen to carry out instructions	11.1%	38.9	50%	2.38
Listen to the presentations	17.8%	48.9%	33.3%	2.15
Listen to answers of questions	13.3%	47.8%	38.9%	2.27
Listen to understand accents	52.2%	32.2%	15.6%	1.63
Asking and answering questions	24.4%	61.1%	14.5%	1.90
Participating in class discussions	52.2%	45.6%	2.2%	1.50
Speaking fluently with speakers	70%	26.7%	3.3%	1.33
Expressing ideas, opinions	62.2%	34.5%	3.3%	1.41
Giving oral presentations	77.8%	17.8%	4.4%	1.26
Reading books	14.4%	23.3%	62.3%	2.47
Reading course handouts	6.7%	24.4%	68.9%	2.62
Reading articles in journals	2.2%	50%	27.8%	2.05
Reading instructions for projects	10%	51.1%	38.9%	2.28
Interpreting tables in texts	18.9%	55.6%	25.5%	2.06
Writing assignments	55.6%	42.2%	2.2%	1.46
Writing projects, reports	84.5%	13.3%	2.2%	1.17
Taking notes in lecture	26.7%	48.9%	24.4%	1.97
Writing exams answers	36.7%	47.8%	15.5%	1.78
Writing application, CV, mail	85.6%	11.1%	3.3%	1.77

From these findings it is apparent that the productive skills (speaking and writing) have been given least importance in English language courses and the students rarely practice these skills in the course duration. There can be many factors that can contribute in such findings. Talking

about student' training needs in English language, they don't have a satisfactory level in two noteworthy English language skills i.e. writing and speaking. Table 2 indicates that they need a lot of training in the following sub skills: "giving oral presentations" (77.8%), "expressing ideas and opinions" (62.2%), "writing application/CV/mail" (85.6%) and "writing projects and reports" (84.5%). 84 On the premise of what has been expressed, it is clear that participants are mindful of the significance of importance of language communication in their future profession, since the greater part of engineering students are typically employed in organizations where they should have the capacity to convey with other organizations around the globe either orally or in composed structures.

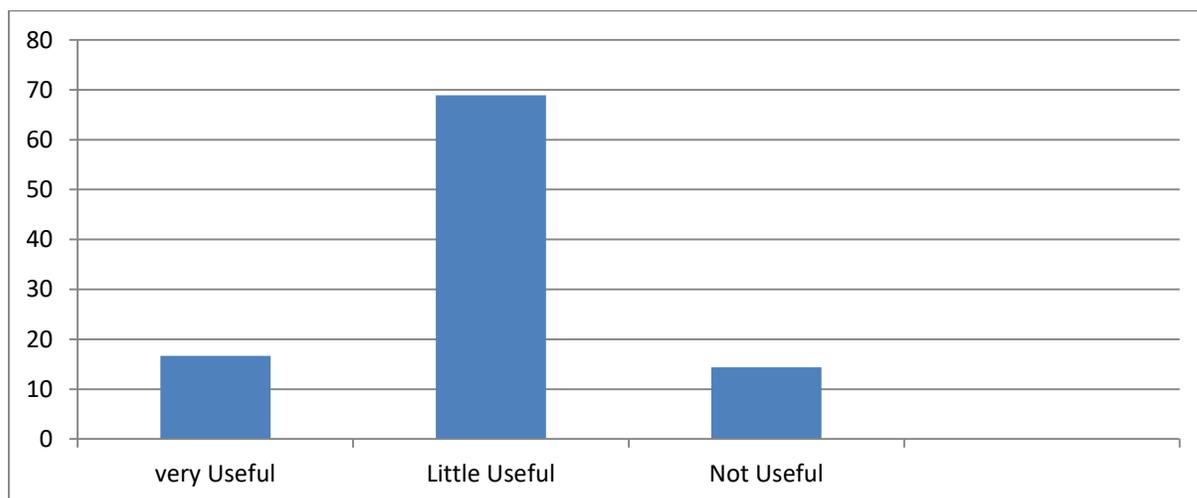
Fifth sections of the questionnaire inquired the preferred teaching style of the participants by which method they feel more comfortable when it comes to language learning. Participants chose their favorite teaching method out of five given options. 37.8% (n=34) feel more comfort in giving presentations and making projects while 30% (n=27) preferred group discussions where teachers is just a facilitator followed by learning through AV aids where 18.9% (n=17) participants were in support of this method. Only 8.9% (n=8) said that they like the method where they have to answer the questions asked by the teachers and only 4.4% (n=4) were in favor of lecturing where teacher is the dominating authority. Most of the students were of the view that they preferred those teaching styles that are considered learner-centered and where teacher is mostly a facilitator. These preferences can be seen in chart 3.

Figure 3: Preferred Teaching Style



Sixth section of the questionnaire inquired the effectiveness of current English language material in use. Majority of the participants came up with the negative remarks about their perception of the effectiveness of the ELT material in use. More precisely 83.3% (68.9%+14.4%) participants said that the teaching materials are either “little useful” or “not useful”. Only a small number of the participants, 16.7% (n=15) to be précised came up with the response that it is very useful. Responses of the participants are presented in chart 4.

Figure 4: Effectiveness of Current ELT Material in Use



## 5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The results of this study indicates that learning English language is of vital significance for engineering students to adapt to their studies as well as for their upcoming careers. It shows that students are not very competent in the productive language skills. The students' self-reports of their speaking and writing skills being lower than the required abilities show that they yet to ace the skills attributes required. Majority of the students believed that English language is of paramount importance and it is necessary to get the command over English language. Subsequently, it can be inferred that the larger part of engineering students had uplifting attitudes and high inspiration in learning English language.

This study demonstrates that the students are not exceptionally certain with their productive skills and the sub skills related to it i.e. writing and speaking, as they reported that they might want to get a great deal of training in these aptitudes to enhance their capability in English

language. In particular terms, certain sub-skills have been distinguished to require exceptional attention for in the new outlined ESP materials. The sub skills are: Participating in class/ group discussions/ Conferences/ seminars, speaking fluently with other fluent speakers of English, expressing ideas/ opinions/ feelings/ objections/ requests/ advice, giving oral presentations/ reports, writing applications/ CV/ mail, and Writing projects/ reports etc. Language vocabulary, pronunciation and communication skills are also worth mentioning that needs improvement. It reveals that students are well aware of the important aspects of English language which can serve them in present and in upcoming careers.

In the light of the findings it is revealed that English language course does not meet their language needs, majority of participants reacted adversely to the usefulness of the ELT materials as far as addressing their needs. Most importantly the studies indicate that the time designated to it is not sufficient enough to allow them to utilize the 92 language productively and this can point out the requirement for designing a viable and proficient ESP course in light of requirements and interests of learners.

Reactions from majority of the students revealed that they want to learn English language through learner-centered teaching methodologies, which can give them additional learning chances to hone their English language and in this way build up their capability. They were strictly against the teacher-centered approaches of learning English language and they only 93 accepted the role of a teacher as a facilitator. It also throws a light on instructional elements that English language learning is not only based on materials but how it can be learnt is also another important feature of English language learning.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

The study was conducted to evaluate the undergraduate engineering students' needs and to learn whether current English language material fulfils their needs. Engineering students have various reasons to learn English language. They need English language for their continued course work as well as professional careers. The current syllabus doesn't fulfill their academic and professional needs. So it becomes necessary to develop a new language course according to the needs of the learners that should be learner-centered and based on task and activities. It must target their language skills and communication performance with proper time allocation. Based on the results of the study, this study may draw the attention of the scholars, educationalists and

course designers to conduct similar studies for other classes and levels and other specializations in order to make the results more valid and more widely applicable.

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